



**Statement by Dr GNM Pandor**

**Minister of International Relations and Cooperation of the Republic of South Africa During the G20 Foreign Ministers Meeting**

**Agenda item A: G20's role in dealing with ongoing international tensions**

21 February 2024

Your excellency, Ambassador Mauro Viera, minister of foreign affairs of the Federative Republic of Brazil.

Excellencies, Foreign ministers of the G20 nations and invited guests,

I wish to express our sincere appreciation to the Government of Brazil for hosting us and look forward to a successful meeting.

We also join Ambassador Viera in welcoming the African Union to its very first meeting of G20 foreign ministers as a permanent member.

South fully supports the Brazilian Presidency's focus theme of Building a Just and a Sustainable Planet. It is very appropriate for our troubled world.

The countries gathered in this room as G20 plus are the most appropriate leaders to take on the challenge of providing workable solutions and approaches to issues that are fuelling conflict division, insecurity and growing inequality. The world is watching to see whether the most powerful can initiate a reversal of our slide to disaster.

The G20 was conceived to draw together governments that would work together in strategic cooperation to create a platform or global practice that would assist developing countries to overcome poverty inequality and insecurity. Our governments acknowledged that changing the material conditions of the poorest was and remains fundamental to maintaining the relevance of G20.

Some of you may recall that when G20 met in the past world attention would focus on the meetings anticipating solutions and strategic outcomes. Following the devastating impact of covid 19 it is encouraging to note our renewed focus on development and I hope positive actions will result from this.

Global tensions have been fuelled by a range of developments in the past decade. These include trade tensions between the largest economies in the world, the

economic fallout related to COVID19, ongoing terrorism and extremism and the difficulties of battling it, growing debt burdens of poor and middle-income countries feelings of exclusion, inequality and abandonment in some regions of the world including Palestine, the Russia Ukraine war and infringement of UN prescripts and lately the Israel war on Gaza and related breaches of International law.

All these have placed the world in a more precarious context and as g 20 we must attempt to craft implementable responses.

Added to these is a steady erosion of trust and competition between states which has weakened the ability of the international community to work together on shared challenges.

Linked to these negatives is evidence of the urgent need to reform international institutions to make them more able to address development challenges. The Breton woods institutions have been more responsive to development needs but much more has to change to enhance and safeguard these changes.

If developing countries are to achieve greater progress with the SDGs suitable sustainable funding will be needed from the Multilateral Development Banks.

Greater financing and development support could be secured through active support to arrest illicit financial flows from and between African countries given the impact on development illicit finances fuel corruption undermine the rule of law and the stability of markets, yet little has been done to address them. The multidimensional and transnational nature of illicit financial flows require concerted international action. The G20 could do much to strengthen its important role in acting on this drain of developing countries resources.

The international tension we see today require balanced and fair approaches to global challenges, respect for diversity of opinion and belief and acceptance that global bodies are most successful when they act in the interests of all equally.